



# Accommodating Rising Powers

Past, Present, and Future



# 1 The accommodation of rising powers in world politics

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The year 2014 witnessed a dramatic upsurge of territorial challenges by Russia in Ukraine and by China in the East and South China Seas, bringing back fears of renewed great power conflicts and rivalries after two decades of relative calm. The need to understand the rising power phenomenon has become all the more urgent in today's world, as the potential for violence is high in both these theaters. 2014 also marked the 100th anniversary of the onset of World War I (WWI). The quick rise of China, a resurgent Russia, and potentially an empowered India and Brazil have brought forward the question of peaceful power transitions in the international system, reminding statesmen of the need not to repeat the mistakes of the twentieth century. China especially has been growing rapidly in both economic and military terms and is poised to replace the United States as the number one national economy in the next decade, while India is expected to reach third position in less than two decades, and possibly second by the middle of the century.<sup>1</sup> Even with lower growth rates than projected, these countries will still be leading economies in the decades to come. In the past, the great economic strength of rising powers led to great military strength, which encouraged them to engage in armed contest with established powers. It is yet to be seen if the current era's rising powers will follow this historical pattern. Although they are unlikely to replace the United States as the preponderant military power in the foreseeable future, it is likely that in the twenty-first century different types of power resources may be vital to claiming global leadership roles.<sup>2</sup> Military strength is unlikely to be the only key source of higher status, as different status markers could be

<sup>1</sup> National Intelligence Council, *Global Trends 2030: Alternative Worlds*. Available at: [www.dni.gov/index.php/about/organization/national-intelligence-council-global-trends](http://www.dni.gov/index.php/about/organization/national-intelligence-council-global-trends). See also *BRICS and Beyond*, Goldman Sachs, 2007, p. 11. Available at: [www.goldmansachs.com/our-thinking/archive/archive-pdfs/brics-book-book-pdfs-full-book-pdf](http://www.goldmansachs.com/our-thinking/archive/archive-pdfs/brics-book-book-pdfs-full-book-pdf).

<sup>2</sup> On different forms of power in the twenty-first century, see Joseph S. Nye Jr., *The Future of Power* (New York: Public Affairs, 2011).

used by states to claim leadership positions.<sup>3</sup> Going by this perspective, the accommodation of these rising powers into meaningful international roles may be necessary to obtain a peaceful international order. Even if the rising powers do not challenge the existing order through war, protracted conflicts and crises could occur, as we are already witnessing in East Asia and Ukraine. Disagreements over global governance, as well as spheres of influence, could generate much discord and uncertainty, compromising solutions to collective action problems; consider the inability of the leading states to achieve consensus on a new global free trade agreement or a climate control regime. In fact, countries like China, India, and Brazil have successfully blocked many initiatives in the trade liberalization and climate change areas – initiatives proposed by the United States and other Western countries – while Russia has successfully stopped Washington from launching military action or sanctions against Syria and Iran with UN approval.

This volume is guided by a central concern for major power accommodation and war prevention in the twenty-first century. It seeks to explore, with the aid of historic cases, whether, and when, peaceful accommodation of rising powers works against the conditions that generate intense rivalry and conflict. The central argument is that though structural conditions can lead to conflict, proper synchronization of strategies for peaceful change by established and rising powers can mitigate the possibilities of violent conflict.

### What is accommodation?

Accommodation in international relations at the great power level involves mutual adaptation and acceptance by established and rising powers, and the elimination or substantial reduction of hostility between them. The process of accommodation in international politics is exceptionally complicated, as it involves status adjustment, the sharing of leadership roles through the accordance of institutional membership and privileges, and acceptance of spheres of influence: something established powers rarely offer to newcomers. Accommodation is viewed by some as the creation of “sustained peace” or “deep peace” among major power actors, akin to the “warm peace” described by Kenneth Boulding.<sup>4</sup> Others have categorized three types of order: “war, cold peace (stability based on competition and mutual deterrence), or warm peace (stability

<sup>1</sup> The accommodation of rising powers in world politics

based on cooperation and mutual reassurance).”<sup>5</sup> All of them involve some form of accommodation.

Accommodation as conceptualized in this project is more than the achievement of stability or absence of war, as unequal powers could be at peace without their status being adjusted. It is also feasible to consider accommodation among rivals as one great power viewing the other as a legitimate stakeholder and conceding to it a certain amount of global and regional power status, as well as a sphere of influence, even though they might not be close friends or allies. The accommodation of a rising power simply implies that the emerging power is given the status and perks associated with the rank of great power in the international system, which includes in many instances a recognition of its sphere of influence, or the decision not to challenge it militarily. It does not assume deep friendship or lack of competition. If competition leads to intense conflict and war, it is not a peaceful accommodation, as the rising power has not been accommodated peacefully, nor is it willing to play by mutually acceptable norms and rules.

Accommodation at the international level involves the accommodated state obtaining a larger share of global governance rights, and/or spheres of influence, and being contented with it. It is more than simple reconciliation, because temporary reconciliation need not last if the reconciled power becomes unhappy with the order. In the long run, accommodation may involve the replacement of the dominant power by the rising power, or substantial sharing of positional rights and obligations but without war and intense rivalry. In the contemporary world, accommodation has become more complicated, as smaller states are able to resist legally and militarily, in some instances through asymmetric means, the efforts by a rising power or a status quo power to maintain or redraw spheres of influence.

Accommodation of different categories of state can take place at different levels, as only a handful of countries are great power candidates at any given time. *Full accommodation* at the global level involves the recognition of a rising power's position in a leadership role in the conduct of international politics in both security and economic areas, through appropriate status recognition within global institutions and consultative mechanisms where its voice is given substantial weight among its peers. This also implies the rising power gaining acceptance for the affairs of its sphere of influence. A key example is the United Kingdom

<sup>3</sup> Deborah Welch Larson, T.V. Paul, and William C. Wohlforth, “Status and World Order,” in *Status in World Politics*, eds. T.V. Paul, Deborah Welch Larson and William C. Wohlforth (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014), chapter 1.

<sup>4</sup> Kenneth E. Boulding, *Stable Peace* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1978), 43.

<sup>5</sup> Charles A. Kupchian, “Introduction: Explaining Peaceful Power Transition,” in *Power in Transition: The Peaceful Change of International Order*, eds. Charles A. Kupchian, Emanuel Adler, Jean-Marc Coicaud, and Yuen Foong Khong (Tokyo: United Nations University Press, 2001), 6.



accommodating the United States in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. The rising power here possessed many parameters of global power status and was a potential or actual global challenger to the established order. *Partial or limited accommodation* may be focused on institutional, as opposed to economic or military, reconciliation. For instance, the USSR was institutionally accommodated by the United States and its allies in the postwar era, but not economically. The Soviets adopted the same approach vis-à-vis the United States and its allies. Militarily, both were superpowers, forcing them to accommodate each other by way of their exclusive spheres of influence. But each refused to accommodate the other in economic and ideological terms, and their containment strategies precluded extensive cooperation. United States-created institutions such as the World Bank (WB) and the International Monetary Fund (IMF) had no Soviet membership and the Soviet-sponsored Council for Mutual Economic Assistance (COMCON) had no Western presence. The United States recognizing China in the 1970s and according it UN Security Council membership, as well as opening up its market to Beijing, is also an example of partial accommodation.

*Non-accommodation* at the global level is when a rising power with most of the material parameters of great power status is largely ignored in the conduct of international governance and is given little or no recognition at international forums or bilateral exchanges. In fact, it might be a target of sanctions, and to some extent ridicule, by the established powers, due to its current or past behavior. Defeated Germany after WWI falls into this category, as does Japan during the interwar period. The People's Republic of China (PRC) until 1972 also represents a case. *Symbolic accommodation* would constitute the giving of some measures of accommodation by an established power to a rising power. The United States' symbolic accommodation of India since 2005 constitutes such an example. Symbolic accommodation may be the precursor to substantive accommodation in the future. *Region-specific accommodation* is also possible, where a rising power is given primacy in a specific region, but not at the global level. In some sense, the rising powers of today – India, Brazil, and South Africa – constitute three examples of regional accommodation, though they would like to accrue more global recognition in key decision-making areas. Some of this may involve specific areas where the rising power has particular interests and strength. Thus, Brazil may be a good candidate for accommodation in the areas that it has most interest in; that is, global financial institutions and other UN forums, such as those dealing with climate change. Not all states have the wherewithal or the resolve to be recognized as great powers, and indeed very few

make the cut to obtain the pinnacle of leadership roles. Hence, historic accommodations may not be good examples for today's world, as some of the current aspiring countries (except China, and potentially India) do not have material or other capabilities for obtaining great power status in the next two decades. But in the longer term of three to four decades, this could change, as they make economic, technological, and military advances.

One thing is clear from international history: non-violent accommodation is a rare event, as rising powers are often not peacefully integrated by established powers. As a rising power reaches a certain capability threshold, it is often tempted to search for higher status through wars, or to alter the existing order through military conflicts and crises. However, there can be a time lag involved in a country's achieving economic wealth and expanding its larger political and military interests abroad, due largely to domestic political constraints.<sup>6</sup> In the past, established powers responded to rising powers' demands for status adjustment with policies such as preventive war, containment, bandwagoning, binding, engagement, and distancing/buck-passing.<sup>7</sup>

### Theories and accommodation

Historically, wars have been the major propellants of structural change and status accommodation in the international system. Not surprisingly, dominant International Relations (IR) theories contend that major changes in the system are generally possible only through violent conflicts. For example, power transition and hegemonic stability theories contend that war is the principal agent through which systemic changes occur in international politics, whereby one global leader replaces another.<sup>8</sup> Gilpin, in his masterly work, argues that the fundamental nature of international politics has not changed over the millennia. Because of the changing economic and military capabilities of major states, the differential growth of power generates unevenness in the international system. The shifting balance of power weakens the existing order, and the rising powers will find it rational to contest the order militarily through expansion until the marginal costs are greater than the benefits they gain from

<sup>6</sup> On the US case, see Fareed Zakaria, *From Wealth to Power: The Unusual Origins of America's World Role* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1998).

<sup>7</sup> For these, see Randall L. Schweller, "Managing the Rise of Great Powers: History and Theory," in Alastair Iain Johnston and Robert S. Ross, eds., *Engaging China: The Management of an Emerging Power* (London: Routledge, 1999), chapter 1.

<sup>8</sup> A.F.K. Organski, *World Politics* (New York: Knopf, 1958); Jack Kugler and Douglas Lemke, eds., *Parity and War* (Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press, 1996).



such a policy.<sup>9</sup> Marxist and class-based theories have assigned enormous importance to imperial struggles as the cause for system-wide changes.<sup>10</sup> Similarly, long cycle and world system theorists believe in the necessity of war for major change to occur.<sup>11</sup> While many historical power transitions and accommodations in the modern international system occurred through wars and postwar settlements, which often favored the winners, will history repeat itself or will we have a more peaceful power transition in the emerging international context?

The main reason for structural theories to argue that power transitions and subsequent status accommodations of rising powers occur only through war is the notion of power structure being characterized by persistence and continuity. Changes occur only when violent tumults take place in the system that affect the power distribution among major power actors. Indeed, many transitions in the past occurred through war, as major wars provided the catalyst for new powers to emerge. Yet, war is not the only source of change in world politics, as the end of the Cold War powerfully attests. Additionally, structural theories suffer from determinism, as they do not provide much guidance for policymakers on how to avoid war and obtain peaceful change. Power transition theories also tend to focus on dyadic interactions while ignoring third parties and their role in generating great power conflicts, or preventing them as members of balancing coalitions or war alliances.

All this suggests that IR theory is weak in explaining or predicting peaceful change. Very few of the classic IR texts talk about peaceful transformation. An exception is *The Twentieth Century's Crisis* by the pioneering English scholar, E.H. Carr, who argued: "The problem of 'peaceful change in national politics' is how to effect necessary and desirable changes without revolution and, in international politics, how to effect

such changes without war."<sup>12</sup> He exhorted Great Britain and other dominant powers of the time:

The defence of [the] status quo is not a policy which can be lastingly successful. It will end in war as surely as rigid conservatism will end in revolution. "Resistance to aggression," however necessary as a momentary device of national policy, is no solution; for readiness to fight to prevent change is just as unmoral as readiness to fight to enforce it. To establish methods of peaceful change is therefore the fundamental problem of international morality and of international politics.<sup>13</sup>

In recent years, a few theorists have attempted to map out peaceful change and status accommodation. Charles Kupchian lists three conditions that characterize peaceful transition. Firstly, the "hegemon and rising challenger must engage in a sustained process of strategic restraint and mutual accommodation that ultimately enables them to view one another as benign polities." Secondly, "peaceful transition emerges from ideological contestation when hegemon and rising challenger succeed in fashioning agreement on the outlines of a new international order." And finally, "peaceful transition depends not just on the ability of the hegemon and the rising contender to forge agreement on order, but also on their ability to legitimate that order."<sup>14</sup> The problem is that these conditions are rather stringent, and it is unlikely they will meet the emerging dynamics between the United States and China, for instance.

More concretely, Stephen Rock hypothesizes three conditions for the emergence of peace among all categories of states: when states are "heterogeneous in the exercise of national power," "heterogeneous in their economic activities," and "homogenous in their societal attributes." These conditions imply that peace is possible (in our context, among rising and established powers) if state objectives and interests minimally collide, if they produce and export different commodities and services, and if they have somewhat similar political and social cultures, as well as ideological approaches.<sup>15</sup> The big challenge in an era of economic

<sup>9</sup> Robert Gilpin, *War and Change in World Politics* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1981). Recently, John J. Mearsheimer picks up the same argument in his book *The Tragedy of Great Power Politics*, updated edn. (New York: W.W. Norton, 2014).

<sup>10</sup> John A. Hobson, *Imperialism: A Study* (London: Allen & Unwin, 1902); Vladimir I. Lenin, *Imperialism: The Highest Stage of Capitalism* (New York: International Publishers, 1939); Joseph A. Schumpeter, *Capitalism, Socialism and Democracy*, (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1947).

<sup>11</sup> Mausius I. Midarsky, *On War: Political Violence in the International System* (New York: The Free Press, 1975); Immanuel Wallerstein, *The Capitalist World-Economy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984); George Modelski, *Long Cycles in World Politics* (London: Macmillan, 1987); Karen A. Rasler and William R. Thompson, *The Great Powers and Global Struggle: 1490-1990* (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 1994); Dale C. Copeland, *The Origins of Major War: Hegemonic Rivalry and the Fear of Decline* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2001). For a counter view, see Charles F. Doran, *The Politics of Assimilation: Hegemony and its Aftermath* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1971).

<sup>12</sup> E.H. Carr, *The Twentieth Century's Crisis, 1919-1939*, reprint edn. (New York: Harper and Row, 1964), 209. See also E.H. Carr, *International Relations since the Peace Treaties* (London: Macmillan, 1957). Few others during the interwar period wrote about the need for peaceful accommodations. In particular, see Frederick Sherwood Dunn, *Peaceful Change: A Study of International Procedures* (New York: Council on Foreign Relations, 1937); C.A.W. Manning, *Peaceful Change: An International Problem*, new edn. (New York: Garland Publishing, 1972).

<sup>13</sup> Carr, *The Twentieth Century's Crisis*, 222. <sup>14</sup> Kupchian, "Introduction," 8-9.

<sup>15</sup> Stephen R. Rock, *Why Peace Breaks Out: Great Power Reapprochement in Historical Perspective* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1989), 12-15. Scholars who work in the area of enduring rivalries also offer ideas for conditions that produce peaceful accommodation. For instance, see Paul F. Diehl and Gary Goetz, *War and Peace in International Rivalry* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2000); Karen



globalization is that state interests in the political and economic realms could collide, and countries and corporations could compete in the same economic domains. Moreover, rapid wealth creation may encourage major powers to disregard the principles of free and fair trade. Great powers are generally ones with global interests, though their regional interests might be different from their global interests, and as such they may not exercise power in a heterogeneous fashion. It is also unlikely that regime compatibility among great powers is achievable, however desirable it might be. The question, then, is how to fashion an international order in which different types of rising powers and dominant actors can co-exist and reduce points of tension while recognizing each other's power and status aspirations.

Despite the occasional foray into peaceful change by a handful of scholars like the ones just listed, mainstream IR theories are yet to focus on peaceful change vigorously or offer the conditions under which a rising power is admitted to the rank of major power, even if it is a rival of the established powers. Hence, their prescriptions for peaceful change seem inadequate. In spite of this general weakness in IR, many relevant ideas for change and accommodation exist, and they can be gleaned from the core positions of these theories on relations among major power actors.

#### *War avoidance strategies in realism*

*Realist* theories rarely talk about peaceful power transitions or the accommodation of rising powers. There is a status quo bias in realism (and, for that matter, in strands of liberalism and constructivism as well), as scholars often unwittingly follow the political calculations of dominant states, especially those of the most powerful Anglo-Saxon countries, Great Britain and the United States, which have been the leading global powers for the past century, or more in the British case. However, the key mechanism in realism for accommodation or containment can be located in the balance of power. To realists, balance of power considerations can lead dominant powers to accommodate a rising power, as the United

States did with China in the 1970s, and Great Britain with the United States in the late nineteenth century. In both these cases, a common enemy or potential rival was needed, against which the interests of the powers could converge. Conversely, balance of power considerations can keep a rising power at bay. For, though realism assumes that material power capabilities change among the leading actors, and that competition for power inevitably leads to conflict among rising and established powers, it has avoided the question of change without war. However, realism offers prescriptions for war avoidance among great powers that are often based on three strategies: balance of power, containment, and deterrence. Status quo states are expected to follow these strategies to prevent the rise of a challenger to the existing international order. If a challenger arises, war or threat of war may become necessary to restore the balance and peace itself. These coercive strategies assume that a threatening state can be dissuaded from starting a war if the costs of war are made higher than the benefits. When balance of power exists, stability is maintained, as no single actor will become so powerful that it engages in aggressive behavior and resorts to system-changing wars.<sup>16</sup>

The containment strategy is predicated on the assumption that a challenger can be restrained through different coercive mechanisms, including economic and political deprivation and military denial.<sup>17</sup> The logic of deterrence is that a challenging state can be prevented from initiating war if the costs of an attack are made higher than the benefits through a threat of retaliatory attack or denial of victory.<sup>18</sup> These strategies are meant to preserve the system and the positions of the status quo powers. They do not address the possibility that the material capacities of the dominant power might decline and that it might not be able to achieve balancing or deterrence continuously to prevent the rising power from emerging as a system-challenging lead actor.

Moreover, the single-minded pursuit of balance of power and containment, as well as deterrence, can produce vicious conflicts in the international system. Implementation of these strategies may be viewed

<sup>16</sup> For some very interesting chapters on the failure of balance of power, see Jeffrey W. Taliaferro, Norrin M. Ripsman, and Steven E. Lobell, eds., *The Challenge of Grand Strategy: The Great Powers and the Broken Balance between the World Wars* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012).

<sup>17</sup> George F. Kennan, "The Sources of Soviet Conduct," *Foreign Affairs* 65, no. 4 (July 1947), 852–68; John Lewis Gaddis, *Strategies of Containment* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1982).

<sup>18</sup> Glenn H. Snyder, *Deterrence and Defense: Deterrence and Defense Toward a Theory of National Security* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1961); Thomas C. Schelling, *Arms and Influence* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1966); Patrick M. Morgan, *Deterrence: A Conceptual Analysis* (Beverly Hills: Sage, 1983).

Rasler, William R. Thompson, and Sumit Ganguly, *How Rivalries End* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2013). Some other pertinent works include: Richard Ned Lebow and Thomas Risse-Kappen, eds., *International Relations Theory and the End of the Cold War* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1995); Jeffrey T. Checkel, *Ideas and International Political Change* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1997); David A. Welch, *Painful Choices: A Theory of Policy Change* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2005); Jeffrey W. Legro, *Rethinking the World: Great Power Strategies and International Order* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2005); Benjamin Miller, *States, Nations, and the Great Powers: The Sources of Regional War and Peace* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007).



as highly threatening by some challengers, forcing them to engage in protracted conflicts, subsystemic wars, or preventive warfare. In fact, balance of power strategies have been blamed for causing major wars in Europe.<sup>19</sup> Deterrence can be perceived as provocative and aggressive by a challenger, and it may resort to a preventive strike, as with the US deterrence strategy toward Japan prior to World War II (WWII), which was seen by the latter as highly threatening.<sup>20</sup> Even if deterrence succeeds initially, when a challenger finds the status quo unbearable war is likely to break out. A single-minded pursuit of deterrence thus does not necessarily guarantee peaceful change, though it could buy time in terms of war avoidance. Moreover, deterrence theorists have largely refrained from discussing change in their analysis. Theories of mutual deterrence thus assume that if capabilities are maintained at sufficient levels, and threats of punishment or denial of victory are credible to opponents, the preservation of the status quo is possible.

In the post-1945 world, nuclear weapons have played a major role in realist understandings of the preservation of the status quo. There is also a belief that mutually assured destruction (MAD) has been robust and will prevent the outbreak of major cataclysmic wars, especially initiated by rising powers. However, it is still possible that rising powers will emerge without fear of being attacked by established powers under conditions of nuclear deterrence. Further, a declining power can give up its dominant status under the protection offered by nuclear weapons, as the Soviet Union did in the 1990s. This logic, however, has some problems, as it assumes that the possession of a particular weapons system can lead to peaceful change. Although it is arguable that nuclear weapons would force adversaries to behave more cautiously, it does not logically follow that nuclear opponents would inevitably settle their conflict. Given its nuclear arsenal, the Soviet Union could have continued the Cold War for much longer if it had wished to do so. In fact, some theorists during the Cold War era believed in the robustness of nuclear deterrence and the continuation of the bipolar system for a long time to come (e.g., Kenneth Waltz).<sup>21</sup> Probably more than nuclear deterrence, it was the fear of losing economic competitiveness that prompted the Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev to introduce reforms that eventually undid the USSR. The Cold War era saw high levels of conflict in the developing world, and many crises were hyped up by the superpowers in the name of

bipolar stability. Thus, under conditions of MAD and nuclear umbrellas the international arena can witness much chaos and crisis, with leading states engaging in conflict behavior, especially in the so-called peripheral regions of the world.

### *Liberal prescriptions*

The contending paradigm to realism, *liberalism*, treats peaceful change more effectively. Various perspectives under this school locate the sources of peaceful change in international institutions and regimes, interdependence among major actors, democratic norms, and the creation of a liberal international economic order.<sup>22</sup> John Ikenberry, in particular, has argued that peaceful international orders can be created by a liberal leader like the United States if it is successful in binding other powers in a constitution-like arrangement within the framework of international institutions.<sup>23</sup> Proper institutional mechanisms can provide collective security to states and allow gradual change, thereby averting the need for war. Similarly, great powers interlinked by their democratic political order are unlikely to wage power transition wars against each other. They have democratic norms and institutional mechanisms to settle disputes. Moreover, democracies can develop a cultural affinity toward one another. From this perspective, a democracy and a non-democracy pitted against each other could be the biggest source of power transition conflict. Dominant democracies need not accommodate non-democratic challengers and vice versa. However, the larger context of strategy for change by the leading actors is often given less prominence in these liberal theories. In practice, especially in recent years, liberal states have shown conflicting tendencies to use unlimited force to compel others – especially weaker regional challengers – to follow their lead, or to show excessive restraint, emphasizing non-intervention and moderation; this creates a legitimacy deficit for these states.<sup>24</sup>

<sup>19</sup> Hedley Bull, *The Anarchical Society: A Study of Order in World Politics* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1977).

<sup>20</sup> Alexander L. George, *Forceful Persuasion: Coercive Diplomacy as an Alternative to War* (Washington, DC: United States Institute of Peace Press, 1991).

<sup>21</sup> Kenneth N. Waltz, *Theory of International Politics* (New York: Random House, 1979), chapter eight.

<sup>22</sup> Richard N. Rosecrance, *The Rise of the Trading State: Commerce and Conquest in the Modern World* (New York: Basic Books, 1986); Robert O. Keohane and Joseph S. Nye Jr., *Power and Interdependence*, 2 edn. (New York: Harper Collins, 1989); Bruce Russett, *Grasping the Democratic Peace: Principles for a Post-Cold War World* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1993); John M. Owen, *Liberal Peace, Liberal War: American Politics and International Security* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1997); Bruce Russett and John R. Oneal, *Triangulating Peace: Democracy, Interdependence and International Organizations* (New York: W.W. Norton, 2001).

<sup>23</sup> G. John Ikenberry, *After Victory: Institutions, Strategic Restraint, and the Rebuilding of Order after Major Wars* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2001). See also Mark R. Brawley, *Afterglow or Adjustment* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1999).

<sup>24</sup> Georg Sørensen, *A Liberal World Order in Crisis: Choosing Between Imposition and Restraint* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2011).



*Ideas, norms, and peaceful change*

The third dominant IR paradigm, *constructivism*, is yet to produce a theory on power transitions, though its main focus on ideas and security communities could be applied to the problem at hand. Constructivist ideas on change are useful in understanding peaceful power transitions and the accommodation of rising powers. The emerging literature based on practice theory may also be helpful here.<sup>25</sup> The security communities literature, for example, discusses the change of regions into peaceful communities and the sources of such a change. The evolution of Western Europe as a pluralistic security community in a region where bitter power transition wars were waged for centuries offers hope for change without war.<sup>26</sup> The big challenge for this literature is to show how, and to what extent, these notions of community are translatable to other regions and states, especially to Asia and the rising powers there, such as China and India. How do we obtain peaceful transitions if the leading states are not bound by the idea of a security community, or the community's norms of cooperation and co-existence? What if the rising powers and established powers do not share the same peaceful norms and the former view the norms created by the latter as instruments for the perpetuation of their dominant power status?<sup>27</sup> This is an Achilles' heel for constructivism, as scholars have not elaborately discussed the non-Western norms or non-liberal norms that a rising power might hold.<sup>28</sup> Constructivists may also be unwittingly helping the status quo maintained by Western powers if they do not pay attention to the normative claims of rising powers. Some of them may not be liberal-oriented.

The role of ideas in international change goes beyond constructivism. A number of scholars have used ideational and normative factors to account for change, arguing that war as a mechanism for transformation has become obsolete and that major powers are unlikely to wage wars to obtain power positions. Major wars, according to John Mueller, have

<sup>25</sup> For instance, see Vincent Poulton, *International Security in Practice: The Politics of NATO-Russia Diplomacy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010).

<sup>26</sup> Emanuel Adler and Michael Barnett, eds., *Security Communities* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998).

<sup>27</sup> For instance, Chinese conceptions of order are based on the tributary system, which offered centuries of peace and order. See David C. Kang, *China Rising: Peace, Power and Order in East Asia* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2007); David C. Kang, *East Asia Before the West: Five Centuries of Trade and Tribute* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2010).

<sup>28</sup> An exception is Amitav Acharya, *Whose Ideas Matter? Agency and Power in Asian Regionalism* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2009). For another perspective on non-Western norms, see Kishore Mahbubani, *The New Asian Hemisphere: The Irresistible Shift of Global Power to the East* (New York: Public Affairs, 2009).

become obsolescent, just like other social institutions, such as slavery and dueling.<sup>29</sup> John Vasquez argues that Europeans had a peculiar conception of power and that the world wars they fought were largely the product of the practice of power politics among them.<sup>30</sup> Going by these theorists, changes in ideas and norms will make war the least desirable option for great powers and aspiring great powers. The changing norms thus make it possible for rising powers to seek alternative routes and allow established powers to integrate them into normative orders that preclude war.<sup>31</sup>

**Grand strategies of peaceful change**

Are there grand strategies for peaceful accommodation? This volume assumes that material changes relating to wealth acquisition methods and technological innovations among leading states will produce shifts in power capabilities. The rise of new power centers demands accommodative strategies for obtaining change without war and a peaceful international order. Thus, this volume locates the main source of non-violent change at the systemic level in the grand strategies of the status quo states. It enquires: (1) What strategies adopted by the leading states and the rising powers could avoid war and help a peaceful systemic transformation? (2) Conversely, what strategies would lead to the rise of a revisionist state bent on system change by resorting to war?

The argument of this volume is that peaceful transformation is possible despite structural changes if the dominant status quo powers follow a mixed grand strategy that gives more or less equal weight to gradual accommodation and balance/deterrence against a potential challenger. The challenger must also hold a peaceful rise strategy and seek incremental, as opposed to rapid, change. Accordingly, rising challengers may have to be identified and accommodated into the international order prior

<sup>29</sup> John Mueller, *Renaissance from Doomsday: The Obsolescence of Major War* (New York: Basic Books, 1989).

<sup>30</sup> John A. Vasquez, *The War Puzzle* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993).

<sup>31</sup> Peaceful change at the international level has been discussed from the English school perspective. Hedley Bull, Adam Watson, and Barry Buzan are a few scholars who dwell on international order and international society, though it is unclear what concrete strategies they are offering. The key argument is that a society of states exists in the anarchic international system based on rules and regulations that are applicable to great powers. There is much buried in this literature that could be useful for understanding peaceful power transitions and stable international order, even if they do not offer rigorous explanations for these phenomena. For this literature, see Bull, *The Anarchical Society*; Martin Wright, *Systems of States*, ed. Hedley Bull (Leicester University Press, June 1977); Barry Buzan, *From International to World Society? English School Theory and the Social Structure of Globalisation* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004); Andrew Hurrell, *On Global Order: Power, Values, and the Constitution of International Society* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007).



to their becoming militarily hostile to the status quo states. If attempts at accommodation do not succeed at the early stage of systemic challenge, the strategy should focus on coercive approaches such as balance of power, containment, and deterrence, while at the same time providing sufficient opportunities for peaceful accommodation of the revisionist state. A successful accommodation strategy may require an effective political role for the challenger and acceptance of its sphere of influence not only geopolitically, but also in other domains where its interests matter most. Increasing the cost of aggression deters the outbreak of war at least for a period of time. However, even when deterrence and containment are pursued, without a strategy that offers the challenger a role in system management that effectively ingratiates it, a system-wide or region-specific conflict can erupt, especially if military balances and political opportunities suddenly tilt in favor of the rising challenger and if its leaders perceive that their position could deteriorate in the future. This accommodation is also very much in the self-interest of a status quo state, as it may decline in the long-run, and at that time, the new system leader is likely to uphold elements of the previous order only if it has earlier been integrated into the norms of that order.

The rising power must also pursue a strategy of incremental peaceful change, as opposed to violent change. It should be willing to accept institutions as arenas for change and use its position to achieve its goals peacefully. This may require it to develop norms of co-existence even when acquiring more material capabilities. It should not violently alter the order, or especially the territorial status quo in its immediate region. Thus, the greater the synchronization of the strategies of the established power and the rising power, the higher the chances for peaceful accommodation. It is also assumed that status quo powers will decline slowly but surely and will want to adjust to their decline and create some powerful norms and principles that will be in existence even after they lose their prime status. Further, the rising powers will increase their capabilities over a period of decades, not years, allowing them to adjust and integrate slowly and without resorting to violence.

### The strategies of accommodation

In this project, the most critical factor in determining whether peaceful accommodation is likely to occur is whether established powers pursue a strategy of gradual accommodation prior to, and at each stage of, a structural competition and whether they succeed in convincing the rising power to join ranks in maintaining a peaceful order. It must be emphasized that accommodation is a slow process and occurs mostly

when contending states accept the crucial norms of an existing order as legitimate and valuable. Variations in this strategy can be elaborated. The following propositions summarize the strategies and their expected effects.

*Ideological/normative accommodation:* Peaceful accommodation takes place when the established powers and the rising powers accept the core ideological and normative frameworks of the international order as legitimate. Under this scenario, a simultaneous process takes place: the challenger recognizes and accepts at least some of the core normative framework offered by the dominant power and vice versa – the dominant power accepts many elements of the normative order offered by the challenger or potential challenger. The possibility of accommodation is higher if both sides are democratic states, as the axioms of democratic peace can work in this relationship. The order they create should be legitimate in the eyes of other key states, especially regional powers. In the contemporary world, this would mean regional states voluntarily accepting power transition as legitimate, unlike in the past, when great powers could obtain legitimacy through coercive means and postwar settlements among themselves.

*Territorial accommodation:* Peaceful accommodation is feasible when both the rising power and the status quo powers consider the territorial settlements as legitimate, and neither seeks to overthrow the territorial status quo by force. This is not just direct control of territory, but control of spheres of influence as well. The latter is complicated by the rise of notions of sovereign equality, nationalism in smaller states, and norms that forbid territorial expansionism. A further complication is that two rising powers can contest over territory and spheres of influence, as China and India do today in the Indian Ocean and Asia-Pacific regions. Historically, territorial issues and the unwillingness of established powers to concede territorial rights or spheres of influence to rising powers caused major conflicts. In the contemporary world, due to intense nationalism among smaller powers and the prevalence of the territorial integrity norm, such territorial divisions among powerful states are not easy to accomplish. Even when they have been achieved, powers can have spheres of influence, and neither the established nor the rising power should seek territorial revisions to alter forcefully the spheres in the great power neighborhood. Here the established powers may have a greater role to



play in making adjustments for joint management of the various oceans of the world in cooperation with influential regional powers. Joint management of global commons like outer space and Arctic/Antarctic territories may also be useful. Expansion of status quo powers' alliances into a rising power's sphere of influence should be avoided.

*Economic accommodation:* Peaceful power transition can emerge when potential challengers are integrated into the global economic order and the interdependence among the economies is deep and multifaceted. Deepened economic interdependence and resultant societal interactions thus make it difficult for both the challenger and the dominant state to engage in power transition conflicts, as war will be perceived as costly to their survival and prosperity. A problem here is that changing economic fortunes might cause the expectations of the powers to diverge over time.

*Institutional accommodation:* Peaceful accommodation can take place when challengers and potential challengers are co-opted through international institutions and the norms and principles inherent in them. Smaller actors, who are likely to join the revisionist state in a war, are also integrated through the institutional set up. Accommodation would mean effective participation of emerging major states in system-wide decisions and, thereby, provide them with some key leadership roles. Rising powers should make every effort to peacefully develop their spheres of influence and give a voice to the regional states through institutional mechanisms. It may take leadership in creating new institutions, but meaningful membership of established and rising powers is essential to such institutions not becoming arenas of exclusive privilege and power contestation.

Thus, how the established states distribute economic and political benefits to rising powers matters because dividing systemic benefits is essential for successful accommodation. None of the leading states should take undue advantage of the economic order, as continued grievance could produce military challenge. None of this assumes change will always be smooth and absent of crises. It is the willingness to accept a rising power without war that is the main concern here. Periodic crisis may in fact spur the parties to compromise, out of fear of the consequences of war outpacing the benefits.

Not all rising powers equally seek territorial adjustments or spheres of influence. In the contemporary world, accommodation could be more in

the areas of participation in institutions and governance and in economic privileges. Thus, a country like Brazil is not seeking a sphere of influence in Latin America in the classical European sense, but a higher say in international governance. India also seeks such readjustments, though it may not want others upsetting its sphere of influence in South Asia and the Indian Ocean region. The two most active powers today for sphere of influence are Russia and China; the former wants to regain influence over its immediate region, while the latter seeks to gain control over the South China Sea, with all the economic advantages that come with it. The challenge to their ambitions is from smaller states that will be affected by these efforts, and the United States cannot easily accommodate them as previous great powers did at the end of global wars. Institutional accommodation of a rising power may be thwarted by another rising power or by smaller states, as evident in the stalled negotiations for UN Security Council reforms that are supposed to offer countries such as India and Brazil permanent membership.

### Strategies of rising powers

The strategies of the rising powers also matter greatly in the process of peaceful accommodation. The most relevant question here is: Does the rising power want to pursue a peaceful rise strategy or does it want to accelerate its search for a leadership role through war and territorial conquest? Rising powers which perceive that the order is malleable and can accommodate their interests may not challenge it violently. Those who believe that the order is unlikely to be changed without violent challenge may resort to conflict if the perceived costs are lower than the perceived benefits. Moreover, whether the rising power is willing to be accommodated at four levels – ideological/normative, territorial/spheres of influence, economic, and institutional – matters considerably in the eventual outcome. This may entail the rising power adjusting its grand strategy to incremental advancement as opposed to a violent overturning of the existing order. The power may also need to have a strategy of peaceful accommodation with other rising powers as well.

A big constraining factor here could be nationalism and the perceived sense of grievance within a rising power. For instance, as the material strength of the rising power increases, powerful internal constituencies and factions could demand a more immediate accommodation, or higher benefits as well as territorial adjustments and spheres of influence from the established powers and regional states. Perceived historical injustices or unjust territorial divisions in the past could be a source of such revanchism. Weak domestic political elites could prop up nationalism



to sustain their position. Or, within the rising power, different domestic groups could intensify their competition and more hawkish factions gain control over the state's power. Externalization of internal conflicts thus could become a major source of instability between rising powers and established powers, as well as regional states, which may also have factions that believe in non-compromising positions. These dynamics within the rising power could be met with more strident positions by the established powers. Peaceful change thus depends on the elite's ability to prevent nationalist and hawkish domestic groups from establishing their control over the political order.

One of the key strategic approaches of a rising power could be to wait and gradually seek normative adjustments rather than quick adjustments in status. As newcomers are rarely accepted into privileged clubs, they may still seek incremental adjustments without violence. Much depends on how willing established powers are to accommodate rising powers within a reasonable time frame. If their efforts do not succeed, they can start creating new global or regional institutions and force the established powers to negotiate. China has started this process with the proposal for the creation of the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB) and the BRICS (Brazil, Russia, India, China, and South Africa) Development Bank and the large-scale interest these have received from major states, including several US allies.

Many questions arise from this discussion: How much accommodation is feasible, and how much is enough to satisfy a rising power? Further, does the accommodation have to be tailored to different levels of material advancement of the rising power? If so, what are the markers for each stage? How would one know the rising power is satisfied or dissatisfied with its status accommodation? Is there a point of diminishing utility or returns in terms of status adjustment for the rising power and the established powers? More fundamentally, what if the established power is declining rapidly vis-à-vis the rising power yet controls many levers of power through institutional roles and does not want to give them up?

### Case studies

The modern international system offers only a few cases of peaceful accommodation. In fact, there are more cases of non-accommodation or violent challenge by rising powers than of peaceful transition. Hence, it is important to explore those cases of success and failure, even though the global context for power transitions has changed considerably in the twenty-first century. Not all aspiring powers today claim their status on the basis of military power, but do so through other markers such

as economic power and even soft power. We should also acknowledge that accommodation in the areas of territory and spheres of influence is extremely complicated in today's decolonized world.

One case that stands out in terms of peaceful accommodation is that of the dominant power Great Britain accepting and integrating the rising United States in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.<sup>32</sup> As Ali Zeren and John Hall argue in Chapter 6, this is also partially a case of a strengthening America gatecrashing the club, which a retreating Great Britain felt compelled to accommodate due to its inability to maintain a viable military presence in the Americas.

A second case is the partial but significant accommodation of China, first by the United States and later by US allies, in the 1970s, when it was offered substantial economic and political concessions such as UN membership and market access in return for a security alliance against the Soviet Union. This is especially interesting given the two states had totally opposite political systems: liberal democracy versus an authoritarian communist system. Moreover, the partial accommodation was sustained even after the end of the Cold War, though fissures are starting to develop in the relationship as the twenty-first century advances and China's economic power capabilities increase and the United States declines in a relative sense. As Lorenz Lüthi reminds us in Chapter 7, this was not a full accommodation among equals, as China's power capabilities were not anywhere near those of a great power. Even then, China's acceptance was viewed as tilting the balance in favor of the US alliance in a major way vis-à-vis the Soviet Union.

The end of the US-Soviet rivalry provides an important case for transition without war. In this case, a leading power accepted its declining material status and adjusted accordingly. Although effort was made to arrest decline, it produced the opposite result. However, it cannot be categorized in the same group as the first two, as one of the dominant powers basically gave up the conflict. The United States did not do much then, or later, to accommodate Moscow, and subsequently Russian unhappiness increased as a result. Today Russia considers itself a resurging power, partially challenging the order whenever it can. The conquest of Crimea and the aggressive military postures in Ukraine's eastern border areas suggest a Russia willing to charge ahead to reclaim its lost geopolitical space and sphere of influence.

Against this backdrop are two cases of abject failure in rapprochement or containment/deterrence vis-à-vis rising powers. They are Germany

<sup>32</sup> Charles A. Kupchan, "Benign States and Peaceful Transition," in Kupchan, *Power in Transition*, 21–24.



prior to WWI and WWII and Japan in the 1930s. The latter was an ally of the Allied powers in WWI, yet subsequently chose to challenge the order for a variety of reasons. The British and French strategies prior to the world wars neither effectively contained nor deterred nor co-opted the challenger, though some accommodationist overtures were made toward Berlin. When the challenger armed and rearmed, Britain and its allies could not develop an effective deterrence strategy. Economic difficulties within Britain prevented it from developing the rapid military capabilities essential for effective deterrence.<sup>33</sup> Chapters 2 and 8, by Steven Lobell and by Martin Claar and Norrin Ripsman, powerfully show the failures in British strategy. Germany's aggressive buildup of naval power to match Britain might have tipped the balance against peaceful accommodation.

E.H. Carr, among others, had argued that the crisis that followed WWI was largely due to the fact that "territorial settlement in Europe had been so favorable to the victors and so tough on the vanquished that it could provide security for neither in the long run. The economic impact of the creation of so many new states in Central Europe had also been disruptive, as had the system of reparations."<sup>34</sup> Even if this is not the established wisdom of history, for the purpose of lessons for the future it is worth examining why Germany and Italy became so revisionist and engaged in immense violence to change the system in their favor. Interestingly, defeated France after the Napoleonic Wars was treated differently and was still given the respect of a great power. The credit partially goes to the efforts of French diplomat Charles-Maurice de Talleyrand, who was successful in restoring the French position as a great power in the Concert of Europe. Obviously, the victors made the concessions, and the question is: If a system similar to the Concert existed to integrate defeated Germany in 1919, would world history have been different? The League was not sufficient to do this as it contained powerful tributative elements meant to keep the vanquished powers down-trodden forever.

Similarly, the US strategy vis-à-vis Japan prior to WWII lacked both effective deterrence and accommodation. Japan's search for autarkic economic development through territorial expansion was viewed as dangerous. As Jeffrey Taliaferro argues in Chapter 9, neither the United States nor its Western allies attempted in a major way to integrate Japan into

the international system. Did the Allies lose windows of opportunity or was Japan beyond the point of accommodation without major territorial adjustment, which the colonial powers were not prepared to offer? When militarists assumed power in Tokyo, no credible deterrent threat was available either. The internal dynamics within the United States, especially isolationist impulses, prevented the creation of an effective strategy.

### The emerging power transition

As the world enters the second and third decades of the twenty-first century, long-term systemic changes are bound to occur, with China, Russia, India, and Brazil emerging as likely contenders for systemic leadership roles, the latter two more on the basis of economic strength and population size, as well as dominant regional attributes rather than relative military power. According to many theories on power transition, war appears to be inevitable. Russia and China have already started asserting themselves militarily in their immediate neighborhoods. However, war as a system-changing mechanism, as in past historical epochs, is unimaginable given that it would escalate into nuclear conflict and the destruction of the planet. It is therefore essential that policymakers in status quo powers and rising states devise strategies to allow changes without resorting to armed conflict. Does the world system today offer a better chance of accommodation than previous eras? Some fundamental changes have taken place at both the material and ideational levels.<sup>35</sup> These changes are:

- Increased economic globalization and deepened interdependence.
- The presence of many institutions that allow strategies such as engagement and soft balancing.
- Norms that proscribe forceful change in territorial boundaries and spheres of influence.
- The dominance of defense and deterrence in military technology, partly caused by the nuclear revolution.
- The absence of intense nationalism and expansionist ideologies among the rising and declining powers.
- The increased nationalism and desire for sovereign equality among non-great powers.

<sup>33</sup> Richard Rosecrance and Zara Steiner, "British Grand Strategy and the Origins of World War II," in *The Domestic Bases of Grand Strategy*, eds. Richard Rosecrance and Arthur A. Stein (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1993), 124–53.

<sup>34</sup> Charles Jones, E.H. Carr and *International Relations: A Duty to Lie* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 29. Drawn from E.H. Carr, *International Relations Since the Peace Treaties* (London, Macmillan, 1927).

<sup>35</sup> Some believe the behavioral patterns of today's rising powers are essentially conservative and driven by domestic stakeholders who support the existing order rather than wanting to overthrow it. For this, see Miles Kahler, "Rising Powers and Global Governance: Negotiating Change in a Resilient Status Quo," *International Affairs* 89, no. 3 (May 2013), 711–29.



*Intensified globalization* has indeed brought the economies of all rising and established powers to an unprecedented level of interconnectedness. In terms of trade and investment, these economies are linked, and developing an autarkic economy has indeed become very difficult for any rising power. Going by the arguments of the interdependence school, the resulting interdependence should offer a certain level of comfort for peace, as deeply entrenched economies would be reluctant to escalate rivalries to the military level. The fact that all rising powers are benefiting from deepened globalization is a positive feature of the current system.

The second liberal mechanism of peace, the widespread availability of *international institutions* to engage and constrain one another, offers rays of hope for peaceful change and accommodation. Institutions offer a great arena for soft balancing and engagement, two dimensions of the hedging strategy that major powers have used in the current transition phase.<sup>36</sup> While hard balancing relies on traditional military buildup and alignment, soft balancing is used to restrain threatening behavior through limited ententes and institutional and other means, such as economic sanctions, in a sustained fashion. The proliferation of institutions at the global and regional levels suggests that there are different arenas available in which a rising power can assert itself and acquire higher status. China, for instance, is a member of the core institutions of the system, such as the United Nations and its agencies, G20, and financial institutions such as the World Trade Organization (WTO), the WB, and the IMF, though it may want a greater voice within them. The rising powers themselves are creating new institutions, such as BRICS and the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO), suggesting that established institutions are not the only venues they see for status recognition and advancement.

The third factor is the prevalence of *norms of territorial integrity* against forceful change of borders. These norms grew out of the Cold War era and were strengthened by the decolonization process. They offer a certain level of assurance against blatant territorial expansion. The newly emerged states assiduously want to defend their autonomy and sovereignty, as evident from their resistance in many instances to great power aggressions and behavior at the UN and other global forums. If these norms are well entrenched, and the rising powers do not then engage in territorial conquests as they did in previous historical eras, will

the world see a different kind of transition in the coming decades? Do the norms encompass indirect control of foreign states, or only direct acquisition of territories? Here, China may not be following the norms fully, as made evident by its challenges to the territorial orders in the South and East China Seas and toward India. Its active pursuit of land acquisition and control of oil and natural gas fields in Africa, Central Asia, and Latin America may also generate potential problems for the indirect control issue. Russia's behavior in Ukraine in 2014 also challenges the territorial integrity norm in a significant manner.

The *technological innovations of warfare* are yet another factor that prohibits direct conquest. Nuclear weapons embellish the deterrent aspect, but a whole array of weaponry today supports defense and deterrence, as opposed to offense. The "cult of the offensive" is often credited for war in Europe.<sup>37</sup> This factor is critical in constraining rising powers from adopting offensive military doctrines and strategies. But what if future revolutions in military affairs produce new weapons, especially in cyberspace and outer space, that allow easy offense? Asymmetric strategies can also be used for offensive purposes, as evident from the widespread use of cyber war in different theaters even during peacetime, including those by the rising China.

The nuclear revolution in particular deserves our attention. The uncontested nature of nuclear weapons is now well established.<sup>38</sup> The advent of nuclear weapons has made large-scale wars of conquest almost impossible, given the chance of mutual annihilation. It has also taken away many short war illusions and the advantages of offensive doctrines. Powers, even if they are unhappy with the order, are constrained by deterrence, though they may attempt to design around it. Future power contests by rising powers are therefore likely to rely on asymmetric means until new weapons systems allow offensive advances and defense and deterrence are whittled down.

Finally, the *absence of intense nationalism* propelled by expansionist ideologies such as fascism, Nazism, and Marxist-Leninism offers a certain amount of comfort that rising powers may not succumb to the temptation to become highly revisionist as previous rising powers did. However,

<sup>37</sup> Stephen Van Evera, "The Cult of the Offensive and the Origins of the First World War," *International Security* 9, no. 1, (Summer 1984), 58–107.

<sup>38</sup> On this, see Bernard Brodie, *The Absolute Weapon: Atomic Power and World Order* (New York: Harcourt, Brace, and Company, 1946); Robert Jervis, *The Nuclear Revolution: Statecraft and the Prospect of Armageddon* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1989); Richard J. Harknett, "State Preferences, Systemic Constraints, and the Absolute Weapon," in *The Absolute Weapon Revisited: Nuclear Arms and the Emerging International Order*, eds. T.V. Paul, Richard J. Harknett, and James J. Wirtz (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1998), 47–72.

<sup>36</sup> T.V. Paul, "Introduction: The Enduring Axioms of Balance of Power Theory and Their Contemporary Relevance," in *Balance of Power: Theory and Practice in the 21st Century*, eds. T.V. Paul, James J. Wirtz, and Michel Fortmann (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2004); T.V. Paul, "Soft Balancing in the Age of US Primacy," *International Security* 30, no. 1 (Summer 2005), 46–71; Robert A. Pape, "Soft Balancing Against the United States," *International Security* 30, no. 1 (Summer 2005), 7–45.



what is noticeable is the suddenness with which expansionist ideologies can successfully emerge and change a population's attitude. Germany and Japan succumbed to fascism even though they previously had quasi-democracies in power. The international climate became intolerable from the militaristic elite's point of view, while the population appears to have bought into the idea through the elite's propaganda. The established powers' attitudes did not help. For instance, the racist immigration policies of the United States might have strengthened the Japanese public's hostility toward the United States.

Are these five factors sufficient for peaceful change? Or are we condemned to see another power transition conflict, for instance between China and the United States? What are the sources of potential rivalry and conflict? Under what conditions will the current era of limited hard balancing and soft balancing lead to intense balance of power competition? What role will changing technologies, especially technologies of warfare – nuclear, conventional, and cyber – play in the challenging of the order by the rising powers? Will territory and spheres of influence play a big role in the emerging order, as they did in previous eras? Will nationalism reemerge as a powerful force among rising and declining powers, propelling them to conflict? Will economic changes encourage smaller states to jump on the bandwagon of the rising powers that offer them security and economic goods?

In the case of China's accommodation, there are many factors that point to a limited but crisis-ridden accommodation and the emergence of a cold peace between Beijing and the United States. China has partially accepted some of the norms, but has a big weakness in terms of democratic governance of its domestic political system. The United States is unlikely to accommodate China fully unless it becomes a democratic state, a prospect that looks remote. China's insertion into the global economic order is a silver lining here. In this sphere, largely due to China's economic strategy, the United States has at least not contested China's emergence as a powerful economic actor. In the institutional arena, China's accommodation is already largely accomplished, though it is still a limited player in global financial institutions: a fact China is trying to rectify itself through the creation of new institutions such as the Asian Infrastructure Development Bank (AIDB).

China's big challenge is its conflictual relations with other leading Asian powers, such as Japan and India, in addition to a majority of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) member states, including Vietnam. The Chinese territorial claims in the East China and South China Seas and toward India are one reason for this. Further, ideologically, most democratic Asian states do not have much in common

with China, despite the increased use of soft power by Beijing to create legitimacy for its dominant status in the region. This is not to deny the limited civilizational influence of China over East and South East Asia, especially through the vestiges of the old tributary system. This suggests that if China asserts itself too much militarily it may provoke a hard balancing coalition among major and minor powers. China's "peaceful development" (formerly "peaceful rise") strategy has somewhat checked the possibility of an intense balance of power conflict. The question, naturally, is for how long this will be sustainable. The United States, China, and other regional states affected by China's rise have pursued soft balancing and engagement strategies under the larger umbrella of hedging, at least during the first two decades of the post-Cold War era, only to now enter into a limited hard balancing competition.<sup>39</sup> China's bargaining strategy, as Kai He argues in Chapter 10, provides some possibilities for peaceful accommodation, though it could go the opposite way if the bargaining ends up in miscalculations on either side.

The Indian accommodation is more likely to happen peacefully. The US–India rapprochement since 2005 is an example of partial accommodation of a rising power, though it is still a work in progress. This case is ongoing, and it will be interesting to see whether it progresses positively, since India and the United States share many goals relating to the ideological/normative, economic, and institutional realms. Yet full convergence is difficult given India is still not materially strong enough to challenge the established powers. It is slowly being inserted into the global economic arena, and its democratic norms are somewhat convergent. However, its leadership role in institutions still remains unfilled. If a change occurs in this area, India is likely to be accommodated peacefully.<sup>40</sup> Much depends on India's own internal development, which at times looks questionable. A condition that may accentuate India's accommodation would be balance of power politics. If the US–China balance of power competition heats up, India could become a major third player in tilting the balance either way, as China managed to do with the US–Soviet power equation in the 1970s.

Brazil's accommodation, similar to India's, may also occur peacefully. However, Brazil's weaknesses in military strength may have to be compensated through other means, such as a greater institutional leadership

<sup>39</sup> Kai He and Huiyun Feng, "If Not Soft Balancing, Then What? Reconsidering Soft Balancing and US Policy toward China," *Security Studies* 17, no. 2 (2008), 363–95.

<sup>40</sup> On this, see T.V. Paul and Mahesh Shankar, "Status Accommodation through Institutional Means: India's Rise and the Global Order," in *Status in World Politics*, eds. T.V. Paul, Deborah Welch Larson, and William C. Wohlforth (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014), 165–91.



role. Brazil may be a different player among the rising powers.<sup>41</sup> It could also offer a test case for a large state being accommodated based on non-military attributes. The question, though, is whether the Brazilian elite will be content with low-ranking military status or will seek weapons, including nuclear, to establish its great power credentials.

What is also possible is that in the new order these powers will remain important actors but will not be the only ones playing significant roles. The G20 membership shows that there are other significant states in the world system, and they may also play important parts in the emerging order. Regional states such as Turkey, Nigeria, and Indonesia are unlikely to give up their claim for a role in global governance. As Kupchan has argued, the twenty-first century could witness for the first time no power rules.<sup>42</sup> On specific issue-areas, the leading powers could still frame and reframe the global agenda, and how rising powers as well as dominant powers allow these and other contenders a meaningful role in institutional governance may well determine the emergence of deep peace in the world system. Many states, such as Turkey, Pakistan, and Argentina, are pivotal in their regions and have been able to assert themselves in powerful roles partly by opposing their regional rivals.

In conclusion, this volume seeks to explore when structural and material changes generate demand for changing power positions and status adjustments, and whether or not decision-makers with agency can play a concrete role in generating conditions for peace. Unlike structural theories, which are to a great extent deterministic, many chapters in this volume point out that peaceful change is possible through the pursuit of effective long-term strategies of change by both rising and status quo powers. This volume assumes that, though the international system is characterized by competitive interactions, major states do have maneuverability within the limits of the semi-anarchic structure, and that they can avert cataclysmic wars by devising effective grand strategies of change. Prevention of major war is in the interests of both the status quo states and smaller states in the international system. Often, a systemic war is likely to unseat a status quo state from its top position more rapidly than would occur otherwise, even if it wins. Smaller states are frequently victims of major power war and can even lose their sovereign existence.

<sup>41</sup> Andrew Hurrell, "Brazil: What Kind of Rising State in What Kind of Institutional Order?" in *Rising States, Rising Institutions: Challenges for Global Governance*, eds. Alan S. Alexandroff and Andrew F. Cooper (Washington, DC: Brookings, 2010), 128–50.

<sup>42</sup> Charles A. Kupchan, *No One's World: The West, the Rising Rest, and the Coming Global Turn* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2012).

### Research questions

- I. Is violent conflict among established great powers and aspiring great powers inevitable as a prelude to power transitions?
  - A. Do rising powers have to reach full parity in military capability in order to challenge the existing order?
  - B. Has international order changed so profoundly that military conflict is unlikely to become the instrument for power transitions?
  - C. Do different types of power resources – military, economic, and technological, as well as soft power attributes – matter in determining a rising power's status in international politics today?
- II. If war is not a necessary condition for change, what else can bring change to the international order?
  - A. What are the principal mechanisms by which a rising power can be accommodated?
  - B. Do institutions offer the best arena for accommodation?
  - C. How can spheres of influence be adjusted in the decolonized world, where sovereign equality is taken for granted by the international community, especially the smaller states?
  - D. What do historical examples of accommodation or non-accommodation tell us about future transitions?
- III. Under what conditions do accommodation efforts fail? Under what conditions do established powers accommodate, or not accommodate, rising powers?
  - A. When is accommodation not appeasement?
  - B. How does a dominant power delicately balance between accommodation and containment of challenger?

### The chapters

Chapter 2 deals with dominant accommodation strategies as envisioned in realist theories by Steven Lobell. He contends that dominant realist explanations do not adequately explain peaceful transitions. He proposes a components of power theory which suggests that states assess power capabilities based on specific components of power and whether they threaten vital geostrategic interests, rather than relative power distributions of the hegemonic powers. Shifts in aggregate power are unlikely to provoke counterbalancing, but what matters is whether the state has the appropriate elements of power to pose a major threat. This implies that emerging powers such as Russia and China may only provoke violent response from the United States if they challenge the particular element